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RESEARCH HEAD EXPLAINS WORK

Says $4 Million Spent in Tobacco Study

The scientific director of the Tobacco Research Industry Committee testified Wednesday that the committee has spent $4,000,000 in the past six years on research and still feels that the causation of lung cancer is unknown.

Dr. Clarence Cook Little, Bar Harbor, Me., was called to the witness stand in federal court by defendant tobacco companies in the case in which a widow is claiming that the lung cancer from which her husband died was caused by his heavy cigarette smoking.

Dr. Little testified that he has been in cancer research all of his life and was formerly managing director of the American Cancer Society. He was named scientific director of TIRC in 1954 when it was formed, he said.

He described at length the work of the committee, which is supported by the tobacco industry and which makes grants for research to individual deserving scientists.

"We have had more freedom than any other such project with which I have ever been associated," he asserted. "The moment any pressure is put on we're through."

Under questioning by Theodore Kiendl, attorney for the R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company, one of the defendants in the suit, Dr. Little said that the object of TIRC is to see what should be done in cancer and cardio-vascular work. He said that the industry exercises no control over the scientists receiving the grants in regard to what they publish or what their experiments consist of.

VARIED SCIENTIFIC PROJECTS CITED

The witness testified that the work of the scientists who have received grants has included such projects as growing human lung tissue outside of the human body, the effects of previous infections on lung cancer, the effects of nutrition and the relationship of malnutrition on lung cancer, the physiological and psychological aspects of lung cancer, and the reaction of humans to physical and mental strains and stresses.

"Our research will go on just the same even if it is found that tobacco has a detrimental effect on the health," he asserted.

Everything found so far, he added, confirms a statement made by TIRC at its formation. He said; "We felt that the definite causation of lung cancer was not known, with a combination of factors having a bearing on it. We still feel the problem is unsolved. The only change is a greater desire to find out."

On cross examination by Melvin M. Belli, one of the attorneys for the plaintiff, Mrs. Victoria St. Pierre Lartigue, whose husband, Frank J. Lartigue, died in 1955, the witness testified that the Liggett and Myers Tobacco Company, the other defendant in the case, does not belong to the research committee.

Asked if he feels that smoking has been absolved from suspicion as a cause of lung cancer, Dr. Little said that he feels the problem needs further study.

Belli asked him if he thought there might be a possible connection between smoking and lung cancer, the witness said that he did, but along with other substances.

The plaintiff's attorney asked Dr. Little if he had not, when he was with the American Cancer Society, advised against all types of irritation which might be a cause of cancer.

SMOKE IN LUNGS IS DISCUSSED

Dr. Little said that he said at that time that it might be irritating if people continually filled their lungs with particles of tobacco smoke and that he expressed the view that it was difficult to see that these particles would not be retained in the lungs.

He added that he now realizes that he should not have "ventured into clinical medicine because it has been proved not true."

Dr. Little said that his committee has done no research in an attempt to isolate carcinogenic agents from tobacco smoke because he is not convinced that there are any agents carcinogenic to humans in the smoke.

The only other witness who testified Wednesday was Dr. Charles E. Dunlap, head of the department of pathology at the Tulane university medical school.

He claimed that Charity hospital records show that the rate of lung cancer has remained about the same over the past five years.

Asked by Kiendl about previous testimony by a witness for the plaintiff that 90 per cent of inhaled cigarette smoke remains in the lungs, Dr. Dunlap said that this is not true. He claimed that the respiratory system is an effective "air-conditioning system" which removes about all of the suspended particles by the mucous material lining the trachea and the bronchi.

He said he had examined a microscopic slide of a piece of tissue from Lartigue's lung, and then showed on a screen a photograph of that slide and said that it revealed a cancer cell formation classified as "undifferentiated."

Attorneys for the plaintiff contend that Lartigue died of a "squamous cell" cancer which is commonly found in smokers.

CELL STRUCTURE OF LUNG SANE

The witness also claimed that some of the cellular structure of Lartigue's cancer was of a type called "adino carcinoma."

He said that the cancer from which the plaintiff's husband died, in his opinion, was predominantly "undifferentiated," but contained elements of "adino" and "squamous cell" cancer.

Dr. Dunlap showed three other slides of tissues from the lungs of very young children who died of diseases other than cancer and contended that these tissues showed the same changes in cell structure which, it is alleged by the plaintiffs, take place in smokers.

He showed another slide of a tissue of the bronchi of a 45-year-old man who died of cancer of the pancreas who had smoked for 25 years and said that the tissue revealed normal cell structure and none of the changes attributed by witnesses for the plaintiff to smoking.

Dr. Dunlap said that he cannot say with scientific certainty that he knows the cause of cancer of any type. He said that Lartigue suffered from a variety of other diseases which could have contributed to the development of cancer of the lung.

On cross examination by H. Alva Brumfield, another attorney for the plaintiff, Dr. Dunlap testified that he has made no studies and has written no scientific papers on the causal relationship of smoking to lung cancer.

He testified that he had examined only one section of tissue from Lartigue's cancer and that often there will be variations in cell structure revealed in sections of tissue from different parts of a cancer.

He agreed with a statement by Brumfield that the pathologist who had examined the whole lung and slides made from various sections would be in a better position to diagnose the type of cancer.

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